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# STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE (SDLG) IN BANGLADESH

## QUARTERLY PROGRESS PERFORMANCE REPORT— NO. 8

JANUARY 2014

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Tetra Tech ARD Primary Contacts:

Anna Farmer, Project Manager  
Dr. Jesse Biddle, Senior Technical Advisor/Manager  
159 Bank Street, Suite 300  
Burlington, VT 05401  
Tel: (802) 658-3890  
Email: [anna.farmer@tetrattech.com](mailto:anna.farmer@tetrattech.com); [jesse.biddle@tetrattech.com](mailto:jesse.biddle@tetrattech.com)

# STRENGTHENING DEMOCRATIC LOCAL GOVERNANCE (SDLG) PROGRAM IN BANGLADESH

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE PROGRESS  
REPORT – NO. 8: OCT. 1, 2013 – DEC. 31, 2013

JANUARY 2014

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BUPF	Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum
CiG	Citizens-in-Governance forum
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GIS	Geographic Information System
HDI	Howard Delafield International
HLP	Horizontal Learning Program
LCG	Local Consultative Group
LG	Local Government
LGCI	Local Government Capacity Index
LGSP	Local Government Support Program
LGU	Local Government Unit
MAB	Municipal Association of Bangladesh
MLGRD	Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives
MP	Member of Parliament
MPG	Media Professionals Group
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PNGO	Partner Nongovernmental Organization
PSP	Participatory Strategic Planning
SDLG	Strengthening Democratic Local Governance Program
UDCC	Union Development Coordination Committee
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UP	Union Parishad
US	Unnayan Shamannay
UZPAB	Upazila Parishad Association of Bangladesh
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Strengthening Democratic Local Governance (SDLG) in Bangladesh Project is currently a 39-month activity (December 2010 – March 2014) funded by the USAID/Bangladesh Mission. *A one-year extension of the project until March 2015 is expected to become effective in early 2014.*

Building on more than a decade's worth of local government strengthening programs in Bangladesh, the SDLG Project has combined a focus on research and policy advocacy, capacity development for local government associations, and training and technical assistance for local government units at union parishad (UP), upazila parishad and Municipal levels. Tetra Tech ARD is the implementing partner for the SDLG Project.

Major SDLG Project objectives are to:

- **Expand the roles and authorities of local governments:** Stimulate evidence-based policy dialogue at the national level, test/disseminate innovative practices and partnerships with local governments, and demonstrate the benefits to policymakers;
- **Strengthen and expand the capacity of local government associations:** Work with the existing union and municipal local government associations – the Bangladesh Union Parishad Forum (BUPF) and Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB), respectively -- to articulate emerging policy dialogue issues and advocate for legal and policy reform on behalf of their constituencies, and strengthen their member communications and financial sustainability. We will also help form a unified association of upazilas, the Upazila Parishad Association of Bangladesh (UzPAB);
- **Improve and expand the service delivery and resource mobilization of local government units:** Work to expand existing capacities of Union Parishads (UPs) and municipalities. We will also help the newly forming Upazila-level governments to understand and utilize their service delivery and resource mobilization authorities; as we do this, we will support elected women officials at all local levels by clarifying roles and responsibilities and strengthening their capacities; and
- **Ensure public participation, accountability and transparency in local government finances and decision making:** Increase the participation of citizens, including women and youth, through citizen participation forums, newly legislated Ward Committees, Open Budget meetings and activated Standing Committees and other local participatory strategies.

Our technical strategy involves building on USAID/Bangladesh's history of local governance support programs; linking with USAID/Bangladesh's and other donor's programs; integrating global and local lessons learned and proven tools for successful and sustainable local governance programming; identifying, developing and demonstrating to local governments innovative practices to improve performance; integrating gender and youth concerns across the SDLG program while supporting women's participation; and acquiring, developing and disseminating through multiple media information on the SDLG and local governments in Bangladesh.

The report is organized to provide information on project performance in relationship to the Year 3 Work Plan. The project work plans were organized according to broad Components, subsidiary Task Areas and proposed Activities under each Task Area.



## 2.0 SDLG PROGRESS BY COMPONENT AND TASK AREAS

### 2.1 COMPONENT 1: ROLES AND AUTHORITIES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

#### MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

##### Major Achievements

This Component combines research, a series of advocacy events designed to promote more informed public discussions and debate, and behind the scenes efforts to build policy maker consensus on specific reforms designed to increase local government authority. This Component also includes work with women leaders from union, municipal and upazila local governments, and domestic and international study tours.

In early 2013, SDLG selected research partner Unnayan Shamannay (US) through a competitive process to research local government advocacy activities, arrange private advocacy sessions, perform ‘best practice’ field research and organize a national conference.

During the October 2013 to December 2013 reporting period, the following occurred:

- **Final 2 Leadership Trainings Completed for Women Representatives** - During the reporting period, two leadership trainings were conducted for the Divisional Women’s Committees of both BUPF and MAB from Barisal. Training sessions were conducted in Dhaka over a three-day period and are discussed further below.
- **Best Practice Case Study Research Completed** – Research organization Unnayan Shamannay (US) completed field research for four case studies featuring two unions, one paurashava and one upazila within the SDLG intervention area. Case study findings will be featured in a national conference, now expected to be held with January 2014. A sample case study report is attached in **Annex 1**.
- **Final Advocacy Meeting Conducted with Policy Maker** – US conducted a final small advocacy meeting in late October with a known advisor to the Prime Minister in his office to explain the importance of policy reform for effective functioning of upazila councils.
- **Legal Challenge on Upazila Transfer Renewed** – Since October 2012, local government association UzPAB has been pursuing legal action on two issues with SDLG financial support - removal of a clause for arbitrary dismissal of elected councilors and issuance of a ministerial policy order to realize the transfer of line department functions under upazila councils. As both cases had made little progress, UzPAB in consultation with SDLG has engaged a prominent Supreme Court barrister and constitutional expert to reopen the case and pursue a hearing with the relevant court at an early date.
- **National Conference Planned, Cancelled Due to Escalating Political Violence**
- **International Study Tour Cancelled Due to USAID Concerns and Political Unrest**



## Major Challenges

- **Hartals and Political Party Activity** – Political violence intensified during the quarter with almost continuous hartal strikes, demonstrations, or blockades of transport routes during the work week from early November leading up to the planned election on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014. As noted, this resulted in the cancellation of a SDLG-supported national conference on local governance and made field work by SDLG research partner US increasingly difficult.

### 2.1.1 TASK A: RESEARCH AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 1: LOCAL GOVERNANCE POLICY RESEARCH PROGRAM (YEARS 2 AND 3)

**Current Status:** *Phase II Continuing.* Research activities continued with a series of four case studies of local government units conducted by research partner US. The studies utilized a combination of individual interviews, focus groups, financial and other document review, and site observation to understand what new practices were implemented after the SDLG intervention leading to improved governance and development results. A sample case study report is attached in **Annex 1**.

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 2: SUPPORT REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES TO DEVELOP LOCAL GOVERNANCE RESEARCH CAPACITIES (YEARS 2 AND 3)

**Current Status:** *Completed previously.*

### 2.1.2 TASK B: POLICY DIALOGUE

#### TASK B, ACTIVITY 1: LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDER POLITICAL MAPPING (YEAR 1)

**Current Status:** *Completed previously.*

#### TASK B, ACTIVITY 2: OPINION POLLING ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM ISSUES (YEAR 1)

**Current Status:** *Completed previously.*

#### TASK B, ACTIVITY 3: LOCAL GOVERNANCE POLICY REFORM ROUNDTABLES (YEARS 1 AND 2)

**Current Status:** *Completed previously.*

#### TASK B, ACTIVITY 4: CONSENSUS-BUILDING DIALOGUES (YEARS 1 AND 2)

**Current Status:** *Completed previously.*

#### TASK B, ACTIVITY 5: CLOSED DOOR MEETINGS (YEAR 3)

**Current Status:** *Completed.* Unnayan Shamannay conducted the last of several small advocacy meetings with policy makers with a prominent academic and known advisor to the Prime Minister. Selected with SDLG based on US' earlier research, the policy reform would transfer funding for the salaries of ministry officers in charge of service delivery in the upazila from their respective ministries to the Upazila Parishad. This change would compel officers to be more responsive to local requests to improve health, education, agriculture and other services that had been legally transferred earlier *in name only* under the councils.

#### TASK B, ACTIVITY 6: NATIONAL CONFERENCE (YEAR 3)

**Current Status:** *Continuing.* A national conference planned in Dhaka for early December was cancelled due to almost daily political unrest and the lack of availability of conference participants. The conference was to feature the results of US case study research on four SDLG-targeted local governments, and discuss policy reforms in local governance with special emphasis on the upazila policy reform noted above and being advocated for in US' closed door meetings. The conference has been postponed to late January.

### 2.1.3 TASK C: INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

#### TASK C, ACTIVITY 1: INVENTORY/TOOLKIT OF LG STRENGTHENING PRACTICES (YEAR 1)

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

#### TASK C, ACTIVITY 2: SUPPORT TO WOMEN'S COMMITTEES OF LG ASSOCIATIONS (YEARS 1 - 3)

*Current Status:* Completed. SDLG completed the final two leadership training sessions for women local government representatives from BUPF and MAB Divisional Committees from Barisal. The trainings focused on association building including dues collection, the characteristics of effective leadership and strategies of women elected representatives who have assumed positions of responsibility in their local councils and related subcommittees.

#### TASK C, ACTIVITY 3: IN-COUNTRY STUDY TOURS FOR LG OFFICIALS (YEARS 1 - 3)

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

#### TASK C, ACTIVITY 4: INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOUR FOR LG ASSOCIATION OFFICIALS (YEARS 1 - 3)

*Current Status:* Completed / Discontinued. Early in the reporting period, USAID issued international travel restrictions for its employees due to the shut-down of the US government resulting from Congressional inaction. While not strictly applicable to SDLG's planned international study tour, this restriction combined with project budget limitations and the prospect of increased political unrest forced a reconsideration of international tour plans. In late October, SDLG notified participants and Indonesian NGO partner URDI that the study tour had been postponed until further notice. Later in the year, a decision was made to cancel the tour and conserve project funds.

### 2.1.4 TASK D: PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

As discussed in previous reports, SDLG integrated this task into activities designed to activate Standing Committees at the union and upazila levels as part of Components 3 and 4 capacity building.

## 2.2 COMPONENT 2: ADVOCACY AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATIONS

### MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

#### Major Achievements

This Component focuses on strengthening Bangladesh's existing local government associations MAB and BUPF, and the formation and strengthening of the new Upazila Parishad Association of Bangladesh or UzPAB. Under an expected extension period, technical and financial support to local government associations will be discontinued. Activity during the reporting period and final quarter of the Component was limited.

- **Registration of UzPAB** – In December, UzPAB obtained official registration with the Government of Bangladesh, Registry of Joint Stock Companies. A change in registration lawyers, internal debate and the sensitivity of upazila advocacy had contributed to lengthy delays in the registration process, which was finally completed with the sustained attention and time of SDLG Component 2 staff.
- **Continued Operational Support to Association Offices** – Support to all three LGA offices continued till the December 31<sup>st</sup> end date, under grants to BUPF and MAB and via direct support for UzPAB.

## Major Challenges

**Dues collection and membership building** – Progress in this area has been stalled since a noted increase in dues collection activity in September. During the reporting period, very few councils took steps to become dues paying members of either of the three associations. The preoccupation of local government leaders with the intensifying political unrest was a strong contributing factor.

## ACHIEVEMENTS BY WORK PLAN TASK AREAS

### 2.2.1 TASK A: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

#### **TASK A, ACTIVITY 1: SUPPORT MAB ELECTIONS FOR REGIONAL COMMITTEES AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (YEAR 2)**

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

#### **TASK A, ACTIVITY 2: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY/BASELINE STUDY OF MAB AND BUPF (YEAR 1)**

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

#### **TASK A, ACTIVITY 3: DEVELOP STRATEGIC/ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS WITH UZPAB AND BUPF (YEAR 2)**

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

#### **TASK A, ACTIVITY 4: LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR UZPAB (YEAR 2)**

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

#### **TASK A, ACTIVITY 5: ASSOCIATION BUILDING, BOARD MANAGEMENT, AND REVENUE GENERATION AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY TRAININGS FOR MAB AND BUPF (YEAR 3)**

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

#### **TASK A, ACTIVITY 6: DEVELOPMENT OF BUPF TRAINING CELL (YEAR 3)**

*Current Status:* Completed / Discontinued.

### 2.2.1 TASK B: OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

#### **TASK B, ACTIVITY 1: DEFINE AND SUPPORT CORE OPERATIONS OF MAB AND BUPF (YEARS 1 TO 3)**

*Current Status:* Completed. SDLG completed its support of core operations costs (including office rent, staff salaries and supplies, and committee meeting costs) for all three associations during the reporting period, either reimbursing or directly paying expenditures through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013. All three associations have taken or plan cost saving measures including lower cost office space and the reduction of one staff member in order for the Secretariats to continue to operate in 2014 despite low dues collection.

#### **TASK B, ACTIVITY 2: SUPPORT UNIFIED UPAZILA PARISHAD ASSOCIATION (YEAR 1)**

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

#### **TASK B, ACTIVITY 3: COORDINATION COMMITTEE OF MAB/BUPF/UPAZILA ASSOCIATION (YEARS 2 AND 3)**

*Current Status:* Completed / Discontinued.

#### **TASK B, ACTIVITY 4: EFFECTIVE DUES COLLECTION AND MEMBER COMMUNICATION (YEAR 3)**

*Current Status:* Completed. The final quarter of dues collection yielded only slightly higher results for all three associations. General disinterest and a preoccupation with pending elections and the intensifying political unrest also contributed to this situation.

**Dues Collection** - Results as of the end of the reporting period were as follows.

- **MAB – 44.8%** - MAB collected dues from 6 more municipalities during the period at **142 of the 317** possible member municipalities.
- **BU PF – 22.74%** - This total is unchanged from the prior reporting period at **1034 of 4547** total possible BU PF members. A total of 56 of these same UPs also paid dues in advance for calendar year 2014.
- **UzPAB – 21.4%** - UzPAB collected dues from 5 more upazila councils for a total of **103 of 482** total possible UzPAB members.

**TASK B, ACTIVITY 5: SUPPORT KEY ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES BY MAB, BU PF, AND UZPAB (YEARS 2 AND 3)**

***Current Status:** Completed / Discontinued.* No resources for these advocacy activities were budgeted after the USAID request to slow down spending. However, under Component 1 SDLG will invite association leaders to the national conference now planned for January 2014.

## **2.3 COMPONENT 3: TRANSPARENT AND EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

### **MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF**

#### **Major Achievements**

This Component trains, facilitates, and mentors local government elected representatives in key processes of transparent, accountable and effective governance in 600 LGUs across Bangladesh. Citizens receive corresponding training under Component 4 including sessions with LG officials. Training is delivered by nine local partner NGOs with past experience working with local councils in their assigned areas.

The October 2013 to December 2013 reporting period was the final quarter of activity for SDLG's nine partner NGOs and faced intensifying climate of political unrest. Major achievements in the quarter were:

- **Further Increase in 'A' Grade LGUs** — The final recent round of LGU grading saw the number of 'A' grade local councils increase to 63%. Those receiving an 'A' grade are correctly practicing almost all key processes and expected to continue them in the future. The number of 'B' grade councils declined to 33% and 'C' grade councils to only 19 or 3.8% of the 500 councils SDLG partner NGOs have been reviewing since June 2013. Current status and rating issues are discussed further under Task A, Activity 7 below.
- **Upazila Parishads Practicing New Processes** – All of the 92 upazila councils trained by SDLG have taken steps to implement key aspects of the training. All have reformed Upazila Standing Committee as per law with broader membership. A third (35%) of those trained have conducted monthly council meetings as a distinct body separate from the upazila committee chaired by the senior upazila bureaucrat. A remaining 8 councils could not be trained due to intense political rivalry among members.

#### **Major Challenges**

- **Political Street Violence** – In addition to the political infighting which prevented upazila trainings, hartals, blockades and street violence were the most significant obstacles to concluding planned activities. The intensifying violence made long distance travel unsafe limiting partner and SDLG staff to short intra-district trips. As a result, SDLG estimates 25% of facilitation follow-on visits by partner NGOs and 50% of monitoring visits by SDLG regional office staff were cancelled during the period.

### 2.3.1 TASK A: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 1: LGU CLUSTER SITE SELECTION (YEAR 1)

**Current Status:** Completed previously. A series of map files detailing project work areas is available online at [www.sdlg-bangladesh.com](http://www.sdlg-bangladesh.com) under Maps.

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 2: BASELINE STUDY OF LGUS (YEAR 1)

**Current Status:** Completed previously.

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 3: DEVELOP TRAINING MATERIALS WITH NGO PARTNERS (YEAR 1)

**Current Status:** Completed previously.

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 4: TRAINING-OF-TRAINERS WITH NGO PARTNERS (YEARS 1 AND 2)

**Current Status:** Completed previously.

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 5: CLUSTER RECEPTION MEETINGS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS IN COLLABORATION WITH PARTNER NGOS, MAB AND BUPF (YEAR 2)

**Current Status:** Completed previously.

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 6: TRAININGS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS (YEARS 2 AND 3)

**Current Status:** Completed previously.

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 7: LOCAL GOVERNMENT CAPACITY INDEX – LGCI (YEARS 1 TO 3)

**Current Status:** Completed previously.

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 8: TRAINING OF 100 UPAZILA COUNCILS (YEAR 3)

**Current Status:** Completed. One additional upazila training was held during the reporting period to bring the total number to 92 while eight were abandoned after numerous attempts due to council infighting. As noted above, almost all councils have taken initial steps to bring their activities in line with the law. These steps will assist in preparing them for more accountable and transparent actions to improve service delivery if and when policy reform to realize the transfer of line ministry departments is completed.

#### TASK A, ACTIVITY 7: REFRESHER TRAINING AND MENTORING OF 500 UNION AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS; FOLLOWUP ACTIVITIES (YEARS 2 AND 3)

**Current Status:** Ongoing. Partner NGO staff continued their facilitation and mentoring visits during the final quarter of 2013 at a somewhat reduced pace due to political violence. Engaging primarily with trained citizen members of the CiGs, NGO staff encouraged them to pursue councilors and chairs to complete outstanding tasks mandated in the law. Staff also continued to monitor governance processes on a monthly basis under the ABC grading scheme helping assess the value of continued facilitation visits.

The final round of ABC grading in December showed an increase in A-rated LGUs and corresponding drops in primarily B-rated LGUs and to a lesser extent C-rated councils. A-grade councils are expected to continue all key processes without outside assistance and B-grade councils most key processes. The chart below details the latest ABC ratings for the 500 LGUs and the percentage increase from Q3:

Grade	Q2 % (Baseline)	Q4 %	% Change (Q2 to Q4)
A	20.4% (102)	63.2% (316)	+ 210%
B	60.2% (302)	33.0% (165)	- 45%
C	19.4% (96)	3.8% (19)	- 80%

## 2.4 COMPONENT 4: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

### MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

#### Major Achievements

Major achievements under Component 4 are similar to those under Component 3 and support the effective functioning of the elected council. Citizen mobilization has played an essential role in improving LGUs.

Major achievements in the October 2013 to December 2013 reporting period were:

- **Citizen Folk Dramas Completed in 98% of 450 Unions** – In the final quarter of 2013, a further 126 folk dramas modeling how local councils and citizen work together were performed bringing the total to 441 unions. As before, just over 50% of the folk drama actors trained by SDLG NGO partners were drawn from general citizens with the remaining actors split between SDLG-trained Citizen in Governance (CiG) forum members and local council representatives. In all, over 400,000 community members viewed the folk dramas, with approximately 30% of viewers being female.
- **CiG–Council Joint Planning Reviews Held in 80% of 500 LGUs** – Each SDLG LGU developed a joint plan with the help of citizens during the early 2013 planning and budgeting cycle. These plans were reviewed for progress and revised in 80% of the LGUs targeted.
- **Second Round Ward Meetings Held in 77% of 500 LGUs** – With citizen initiative, council members in over 77% of the targeted LGUs held second ward committee meetings as required in the law to update citizens on the status of earlier ward meeting decisions on project selection and implementation, and motivate citizens to pay taxes.

#### Major Challenges

The Challenges in this Component were similar to those under Component 3.

### ACHIEVEMENTS BY WORK PLAN TASK AREAS

#### 2.4.1 TASK A: DEVELOPING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FORUMS

##### TASK A, ACTIVITY 1: DEVELOP TRAINING MATERIALS WITH NGO PARTNERS (YEAR 1)

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

##### TASK A, ACTIVITY 2: ESTABLISH AND SUPPORT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION FORUMS (YEAR 2)

*Current Status:* Completed previously.

#### 2.4.2 TASK B: TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIC PLANNING)

##### TASK A, ACTIVITY 3: REFRESHER TRAINING, PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR CITIZENS GROUPS IN 500 UNION AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS (YEARS 2 AND 3)

*Current Status:* Completed. Final field based trainings were completed in the quarter focusing on the need for reviewing LGU joint plans and holding second ward meetings as noted above. These two activities



complete the yearly cycle for local councils and communities, and prepare them for early 2014 planning and budgeting for the coming fiscal year.

## 2.5 COMPONENT 5: WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY

**Current Status:** *Completed.* Two Windows of Opportunity activities have received concurrence from the USAID COR.

- Strengthening LG Ministry audit and monitoring functions (grant)
- Activation of women's leadership in LG standing committee activities (grants)

The first activity was completed in February 2013 and the second activity was completed during the reporting period in December 2013.

### COMPONENT 5, ACTIVITY 1: FRIENDS OF SDLG GROUP (YEAR 1)

**Current Status:** *Completed previously.*

### COMPONENT 5, ACTIVITY 2: RAPID RESPONSE CAPACITY (YEAR 1)

**Current Status:** *Completed previously.*

### COMPONENT 5, ACTIVITY 3: LG AUDIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS (YEARS 2 AND 3)

**Current Status:** *Completed previously.*

### COMPONENT 5, ACTIVITY 4: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LG STANDING COMMITTEES (YEARS 2 AND 3)

**Current Status:** *Completed.* Implemented by four women-lead NGOs, this activity focused on developing local Standing Committees in exercising their monitoring and oversight authority under the leadership of women council members as committee chairs. Local councilor and citizen members of these committees continued to conduct site visits to monitor and report on central government services in health, education, agriculture and other areas; and to review local council accounts.

Major achievements in the reporting period represent sustained increase from the prior quarter including:

- **87% of targeted standing committees monitored services** – The large majority of standing committees trained under this activity have initiated monitoring and reporting to local councils. SDLG will work further with such committees in the extension period in 200 LGUs.
- **300 standing committee reports raised at upazila councils** – While many service issues identified during monitoring are resolved by action taken by the local council or in some cases after discussion at the Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC) meeting, others persist and require intervention at the upazila-level from which most line ministry service delivery is supervised. Raising these service gaps at the upazila Parishad meetings with line ministry officers attending is an important next step in improving local services.

This Windows of Opportunity activity has provided the foundation for extension year efforts to improve the performance of selected USAID sector projects in health, agriculture and human rights through work with standing committees and activated citizens trained under CiG forums.



# 3.0 COMMUNICATIONS

## MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

The SDLG communications strategy is designed to support project results and is organized according to *three themes*:

1. **Media training and capacity building** activities to educate journalists and other media personnel in local governance issues and encourage informed coverage.
2. **Local government association and citizen participation** activities to improve LG associations' ability to communicate with their members and advocate successfully for policy reform.
3. **Advertising and promotion campaign** activities to spur citizen participation through innovative IEC materials and support of promotion of LG associations.

US – based communications firm **HDI** (Howard Delafield International) is providing overall strategy design, research and technical assistance. *Theme One* activities were completed in 2012 and 2013 and were implemented by local grantee **MPG** (Media Professionals Group). *Theme Two and Three* activities are being implemented by local subcontractor **UNITREND**.

Communications activities are designed to contribute to project objectives.

1. **Improving Media Coverage** of Local Governance (supporting all Components)
2. **Strengthening LGAs** or Local Government Associations (supporting Component 2)
3. **Improving Citizen Participation** in Local Governance (supporting Components 3 and 4)

### Major Achievements

#### **THEME 1: Media Training and Capacity Building**

These activities were completed during previous reporting period by the Media Professionals Group (MPG).

#### **THEMES 2 and 3: LG Association and Citizen Participation/Advertising and Promotion Campaign**

Local subcontractor **UNITREND** completed the following deliverables during the October to December reporting period:

#### Strengthening LGAs

- **Two Association Websites Developed:** Organizational websites have been developed and hosted for two of the SDLG supported associations, BUPF and UzPAB. The online addresses are [www.bupfbd.org](http://www.bupfbd.org) and [www.uzpabbd.org](http://www.uzpabbd.org) respectively. These two websites are not only visitor friendly but also equipped with very user friendly 'administrator panels' to facilitate their updates by association office managers. Office managers of these associations have completed a daylong training on maintaining the websites and are expected to be able to sustain association presence on the web after the withdrawal of SDLG support.

### Improving Citizen Participation

- **Citizen's Reporting - Youth (Video Blogs, “Eye/I Reports”):** Fifty youth from SDLG’s 22 working districts have been engaged since September 2013 in training and competition to promote youth video reporting on local governance issues. The social media network Facebook is being used as a platform. Youth from USAID’s Leadership Development Program –LDP are also taking part in this competition. After three regional workshops and intense remote assistance during the reporting period, some 20 video reports are competing to secure their place in the final round. The final round participants will be able to take part in an international workshop in Dhaka and the best three videos will receive a special award in February 2014.
- **Women's Hour Radio Program:** A weekly radio magazine program titled “Jagorone Nari” by and for women is being produced featuring women representatives speaking on key topics. The radio program, devised as a ‘living room comedy’, will feature women from different walks of life such as a teacher, an NGO worker, a laborer and a homemaker. Service delivery and monitoring, financial management and revenue generation, participatory budget and planning and the inclusion of citizens in decision making processes will be featured using conversation, human interest stories, folk songs, etc. The radio program will be aired weekly on FM and community radio stations.

### Improving Media Coverage

- **TV/Radio Selected for PSA Airing:** TV spots previously developed on ‘we are government’, ‘citizen participation’, and ‘women leadership’ themes have been aired on satellite channels during December and will continue until mid January 2014. This period is immediately prior to the February – May planning and budgeting cycle for local councils. According to the television viewership research statistics, known as GRP - Gross Rating Point, 29% to 40% of viewers from the total audience of 5 million have watched the PSAs more than two times. The PSAs were aired on four private TV channels with the highest viewership. Radio spots on the first two themes will be aired on FM radio and available community radio stations in the January to February period. The PSAs can be viewed at: [www.sdlg-bangladesh.com](http://www.sdlg-bangladesh.com)

**SDLG Project Website:** The existing official website of SDLG, [www.sdlg-bangladesh.com](http://www.sdlg-bangladesh.com), has been revamped to improve its accessibility and features. All project information, activities, campaign materials and more importantly the project’s human interest stories are now showcased in the website.

**Documentation of SDLG Communications:** A pictorial brief featuring SDLG successes and communication interventions is being developed. The brief will explain how the integrated communications strategy for the SDLG project was developed based on the project objectives and findings of an insight mining study conducted on citizens. The book will also showcase the significant project results that benefitted from these targeted communication activities.

### **Major Challenges**

Communications activities in the quarter were relatively unaffected by the ongoing political unrest as most activities were Dhaka based.

# 4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION (M&E)

## MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES IN BRIEF

Routine collection of M&E from the field data continued during the reporting period but submission of quarterly reporting at the end of period was delayed as the grant periods closed for four of SDLG's nine major partner NGOs and all four smaller partner NGOs.

### Major Achievements

- **Calendar Year PMP Data** – Data measuring SDLG's actual achievements as of December 30, 2013 was collected for USAID reporting. Actual achievement data was not available for a further 4 PMP indicators to be measured by an annual field survey for which data is not yet available. Values for an additional two indicators were awaiting final reporting by partner NGOs but are expected to change little from fiscal year totals provided previously. PMP data is summarized in the revised fiscal year chart provided in **Annex 2** to this report.

### Major Challenges

There were no major challenges during the reporting period.

# ANNEXES 1 AND 2 PRESENTED AS ATTACHMENTS